(ii) A Committee has been set up to look into the functioning of the Indian Cultural Centres abroad, as well as ICCR's regional centres in India.

(iii) Directives have been issued to Missions on the importance of cultural diplomacy and also the need to keep in mind local conditions when making recommendations for cultural troupes, etc.

(iv) An inter-ministerial meeting has been held to look into the question of international student welfare including their stipends, etc. Meetings have also been held with MEA to streamline the processing of scholarships for international students under various schemes including cultural exchange programmes.

Opening of Passport Office in Mangalore

6203. SHRI GUNDAPPA KORWAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Passport applications received by the Bangalore Passport Office from Dakshina Kannada district during 1994;

(b) the total number of passport applications received by the Bangalore Pasport Office during the same period; and

(c) whether there is any proposal to open a new Passport Office at Mangalore to cater to the damands of Dakshina Kannada district?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) The total number of applications received by Bangalore Passport Office from Dakshina Kannada District during 1994 was 18371.

(b) A total of 82171 applications were received by Passport Office, Bangalore in 1994.

(c) A Collection 'Centre is being opened in Mangalore.

Foreign Secretary Level Talks Between India and Singapore

6204. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Singapore Foreign Secretary had recently held discussions with the Indian Foreign Secretary and inter alia assured him of his country's support for India to be included in the Asia-EU group in future as reported in the 'Hindustan Times' on the Ist March, 1995;

(b) if so, the details of talks held and the outcome thereof;

(c) what are the countries likely to attend this first-ever Asia European Union Summit to be held in 1996 in Thailand;

(d) which other countries, besides Singapore, are in favour of India's membership of ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and Asia-EU Summit; and

(e) whether India, which is a major player in Asia, is contacting other friendly countries to get its deserving place?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) Discussions were held in April 1995 between the Indian Foreign Secretary and his Singaporean counterpart. The latter had inter alia assured the Indian Foreign Secretary of Singapore's support for India's inclusion in the Asia-European Union Summit.

(b) The talks focussed on aspects of bilateral cooperation between the two countries as well as matters of regional and international interest. These talks have led to greater understanding between the two countries.

(c) The core participation from Asia is to be that of ASEAN, which is in the process of considering, in consultation with EU, participation from other Asian countries particularly dynamic regional